

Waterbirds for the Americas UPDATE

News associated with the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan July 12, 2002

Compiled by Jennifer Wheeler, Waterbird Coordinator [Jennifer_A_Wheeler@fws.gov, (703) 358-1931].
Additional contacts/section authors are shown in parentheses.

Continental Planning Update

Plan Publication: Version 1 of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (**Waterbirds for the Americas**) is currently with a designer. The glossy “finished” product is due out by September. The document provides a continental framework for approaching and furthering waterbird conservation, and provides detailed population, status assessment, and habitat information for colonial waterbird species. Version 2 (by 2004) will provide additional detail on marshbirds as well as activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Copies of **Waterbirds for the Americas** will be available at the IAFWA meeting in Big Sky, MT, the North American Ornithological Congress meeting in New Orleans, LA and the Waterbird Society meeting in LaCrosse, WI. It will also be distributed using the networks of sponsoring agencies and organizations. Following that, individuals will be able to request copies on the website (www.NAWCP.org) or via American Bird Conservancy or the USFWS Publications Unit.

Note: The plain text, tables and appendices of **Waterbirds for the Americas** can currently be obtained on the website.

Waterbird Monitoring Partnership Website Now Up: A new site <http://www.mp2-pwrc.usgs.gov/cwb/> outlines the work of the Waterbird Monitoring Partnership, which is centralizing data storage and management, developing standardized census methods, developing statistically valid and logistically feasible waterbird sampling schemes, developing standardized models for analyses of waterbird data, and identifying and filling in gaps in continental waterbird monitoring programs.

The data repository has been created and is available for beta testing. (Melanie Steinkamp)

Formation of a Waterbird Council: With the publication of the continental plan, the Steering Committee will be re-formed into a Waterbird Council. Its role will be to continue the momentum of the initiative, facilitate regional planning, assure staffing and raise funds. A search committee will begin the process of finding representatives for the variety of interests, needs and issues associated with waterbird conservation. The search committee is made up of Bob Milko (CWS), Kathy Parsons (Manomet), Jack Capp (Forest Service), Ian Davidson (BirdLife), Melanie Steinkamp (USGS), John Trapp (USFWS), and Jim Kushlan (SERC). (Jim Kushlan)

Regional Planning Updates

Pacific Coast: Planning in this region is a combination of various groups' efforts. Work on the FWS Region 1 Seabird Plan is ongoing; the first draft is nearly completed. The California Current Conservation Plan for pelagic seabirds, with a geographic scope from British Columbia to Baja California, is also ongoing. Also, the Pacific Coast Joint Venture has contributed funds to address the other waterbirds in BCR 5; the possibility of contracting the work to the Oregon state heritage program is being pursued. (Kyra Mills)

Intermountain West: A draft plan is being written based on information gathered at spring meetings in Oregon and Reno and summer "grounds-truthing." The first draft will be available at the end of July. A follow-up meeting to continue the review of information and formulate strategy is planned for October or November 2002 (Gary Ivey).

Northern Prairie and Parkland: Second-round planning meetings in Edmonton and Bismarck were held in early spring; a fairly complete draft plan is under revision with a goal of fall publication (Neal Niemuth).

Upper Mississippi Valley/Great Lakes: Not much progress to date, but several recent reports from Francie Cuthbert that will be very useful: database and GIS on the U. S. Great Lakes Colonial Waterbird Survey, assessment of priority colonial waterbird sites in the U. S. Great Lakes, planning a workshop to develop a long-term monitoring strategy for U. S. Great Lakes colonial waterbirds, assessment of COTE banding data to determine the degree to which the Great Lakes and Atlantic Coast populations interchange, COTE status assessment, COTE surveys in MI, DCCO banding (coordinated with Chip and others), study on DCCO impacts on other birds (Linda Wires' project). Numerous all-bird planning meetings coming up for BCRs 12, 22, 23, 24/states of MN, WI, OH, and IN. BCR 13 has already had two all-bird workshops. (Steve Lewis)

Southeast U.S.: Occurrence, population, status assessment information is available for review. Waterbird planning specifically for BCRs 25 and 26 was addressed at a June 26 meeting in Vicksburg, MS hosted by the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture. (Chuck Hunter)

MidAtlantic/NewEngland/Maritimes: An intern at Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences has finished drafting species accounts for circulation and completion by species experts. Regional leads are still planning on land manager workshops, taking advantage of fall meetings. Also, a planning session for BCR 14, coordinated by the Atlantic Coast JV, is scheduled for first week in December (Scott Johnston).

Caribbean: A regional planning workshop for aquatic bird conservation in the Caribbean will be held during the North American Ornithological Conference in New Orleans. The workshop, "Aquatic Bird Conservation Planning for the Caribbean," will take place 2:00-5:30 p.m. on Friday, September 27, 2002, in the Magnolia Room of the Hotel Intercontinental. It is sponsored by the Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds as part of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan (Waterbirds for the Americas). It is being supported in part by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. You are invited to participate, but space is limited. So if interested, please contact Eric Carey, Moderator, at ecarey@bahamas.net.bs. (Eric Carey)

Alaska/Bering/Yukon, Central Prairies, Mexico, Boreal, Arctic Canada, Central America, Central Pacific, Central Atlantic: No updates.

Additional Resources

Quebec Waterbird Plan: The Canadian Wildlife Service's Waterbird Plan for the Quebec Region is nearly done, although at this point it is only available in French. It includes the full range of waterbirds, including seabirds and marshbirds, and addresses status and threats by BCR (Gilles Chapdelaine).

Marshbirds: Some Marshbird working groups have submitted draft write-ups. Jennifer Wheeler is combining these into a Marshbird Resource Document. Unformatted information for WHCR and SACR (compiled by Helen Hands), BLRA (compiled by Bob Russell), YERA (compiled by Jim Mattsson), PBGR, LEGR, PUGA, COMO, AMCO, AMBI, LEBI (compiled by Greg Butcher) is available on request to Jennifer Wheeler or the authors.

Note that there is no plan at this time to include species conservation status assessment (concern scores) in the Marshbird Resource Document. Unlike for colonial-nesting species, the Waterbird Plan Steering Committee has not made a recommendation on an approach for marshbird conservation status assessment, differing from that currently used by Partners in Flight.

Important Bird Areas: John Cecil with the National Audubon Society noted that their Important Bird Areas database is being distributed to cooperators and will be on line soon (at least for cooperator access).